

# CULTURAL RESPONSIVITY *at the core of* INDIANA'S VISION OF RTI

*October  
2008*

# *Leaving No Child Behind...*

“The purpose of schooling – no matter how daunting that purpose may be – is to struggle with the tensions that will always exist around the twin goals of providing learning opportunities that are excellent and equitable for all, not some.”.

*(Cochran-Smith, 2001, 93)*



# Equity in education

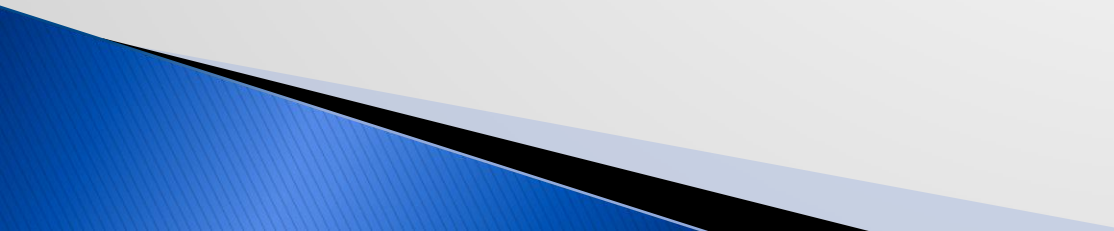
*A principle that guides policy and practice holding high expectations and providing appropriate resources so that all students can achieve at a rigorous standard.*

# Cultural Responsivity

A developmental process.

A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Having the capacity to function effectively in cultural contexts that differ from your own.



Cultural responsiveness facilitates the achievement of all students through effective teaching and learning practices grounded in an awareness of cultural context and the strengths that students bring to school.

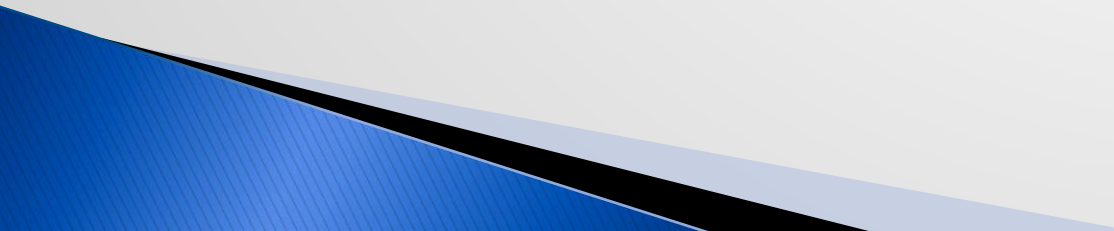
Cultural responsiveness permeates every aspect of education:

- curriculum and instruction
- assessment
- data based decision making
- communication
- family and community engagement
- policy decisions

# Diversity & Cultural Responsivity

Valuing Diversity is a necessary step along the continuum of cultural competency and culturally responsive pedagogy, but it is not enough.

Cultural Responsivity requires knowledge, skills and experience and the ability to transform these into practice which results in improved services and outcomes.



An individual can identify with multiple groups

Nationality

Class

Religion

Race

Gender

Family

Education

Ethnicity

Geography

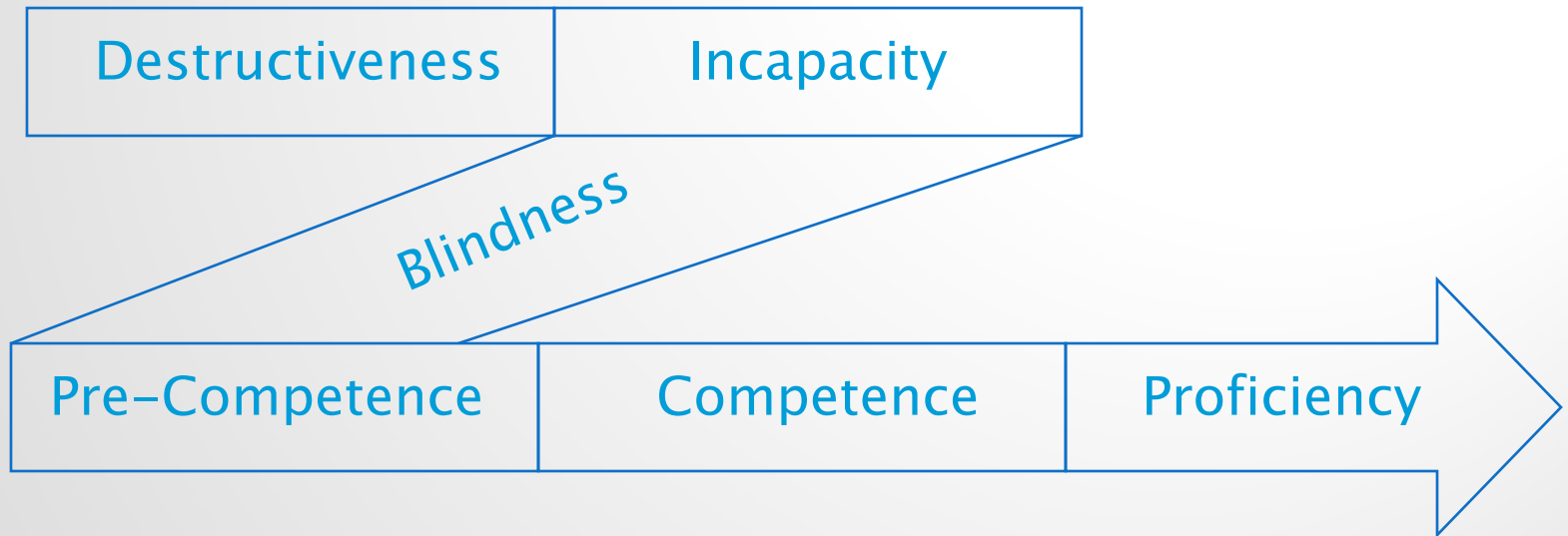
Ability

Profession

Sexual Orientation



# Cultural Competence Continuum



- ▶ Becoming culturally responsive is a developmental process which includes engaging in conversations about race and equity, reflecting on one's own culture and beliefs, and gaining awareness of other cultures.

# Maintaining the status quo

R.D. Laing stated crazy is believing that you can continue to repeat the same actions and arrive at different results.

# Some Lenses of Inequity

Disproportionality in Achievement

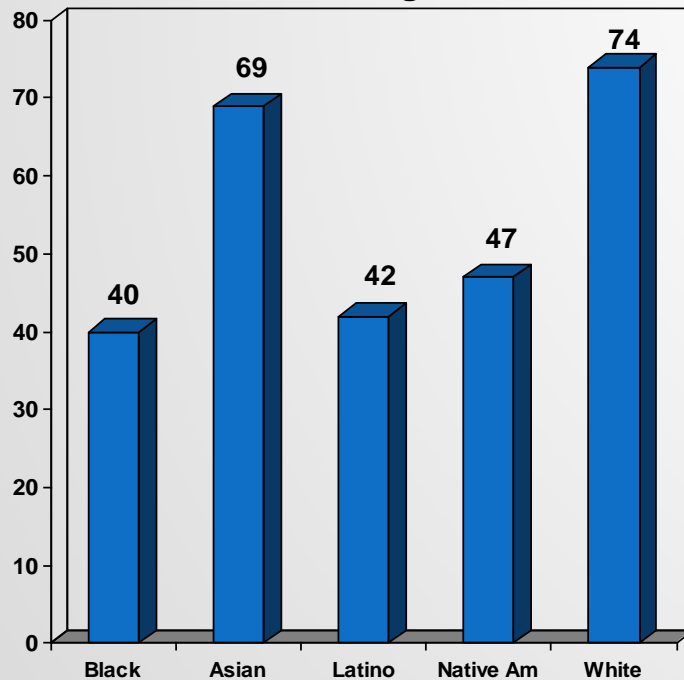
Disproportionality in Discipline

Disproportionality in High School Graduation

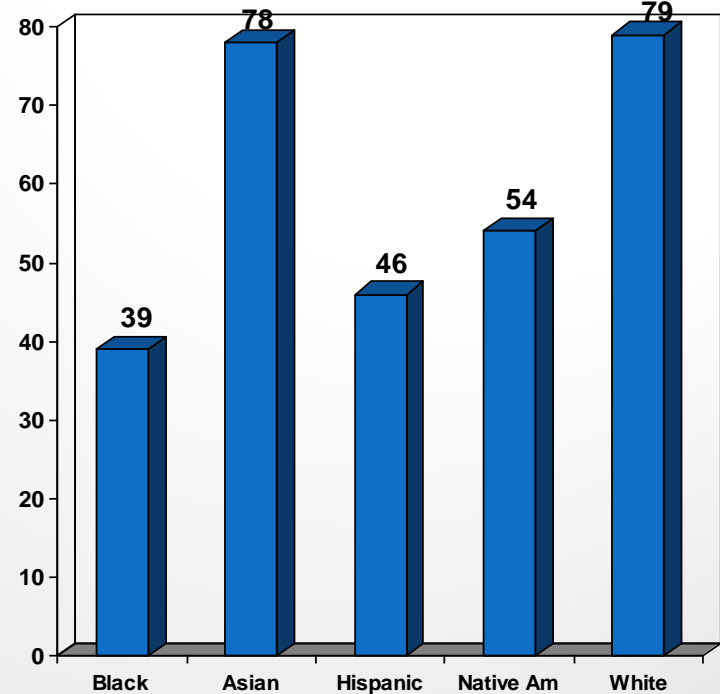
Disproportionality in Special Education

# National NAEP Percent Scoring Basic or Above: 2003

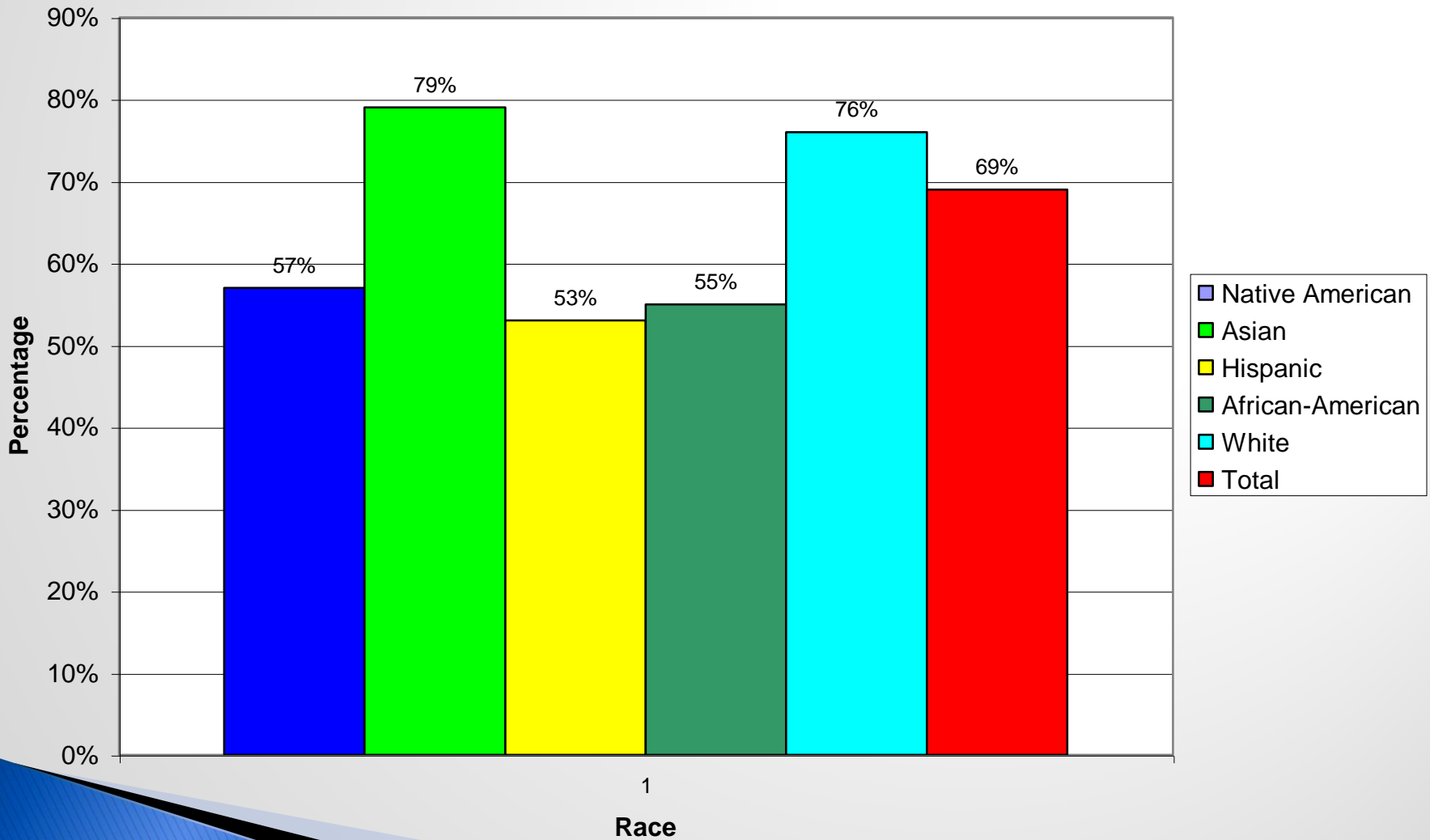
**Percent Basic and Above Grade 4  
Reading**



**Percent Basic and Above Grade 8  
Mathematics**

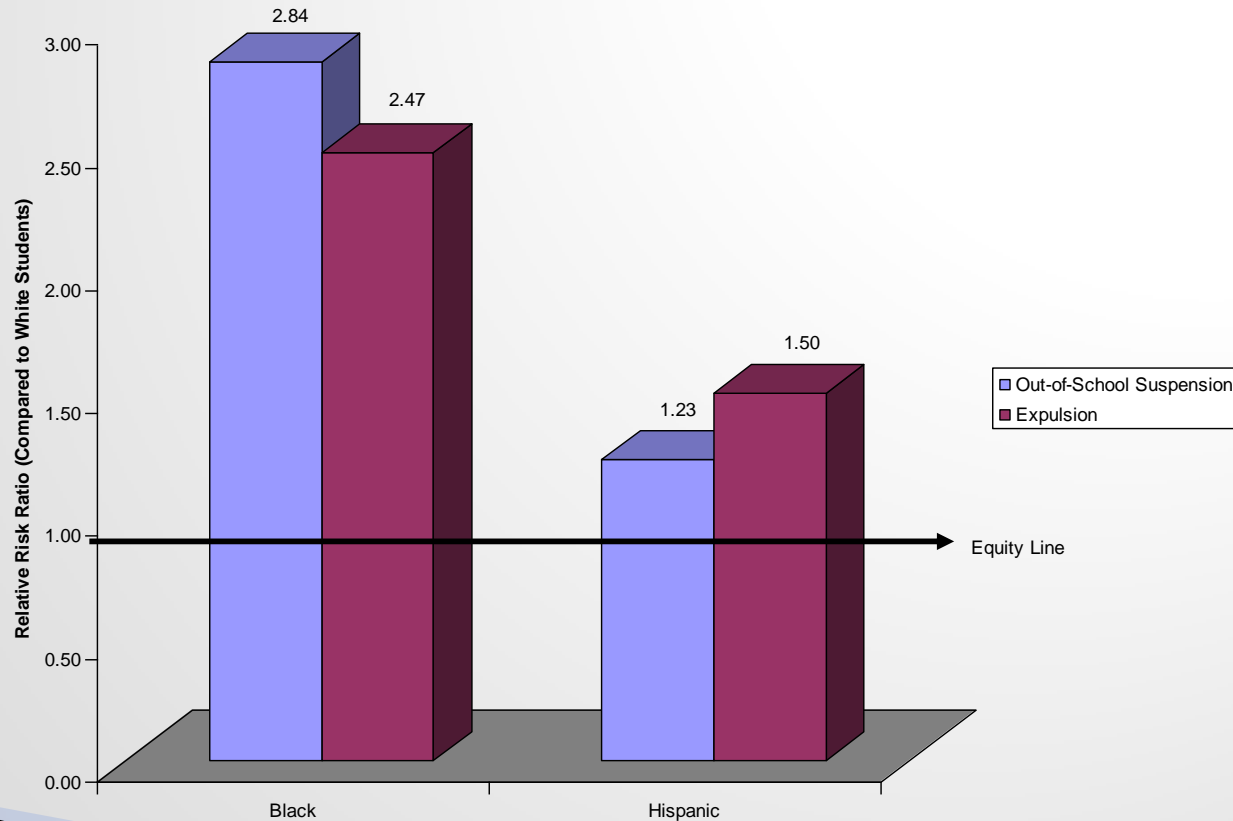


## National Graduation Rates by Race in 2002



# National Data on School Discipline

National School Discipline: 2002-2003



# Disproportionality in Special Education

In addition to the problems the students experience in their personal lives away from school, the schools create a whole new set of problems for children they deem different. As schools become more wedded to psychological models, students are recruited into new categories of pathology. Students who do not conform to particular behavioral expectations may be labeled "disabled" in some way, that is, suffering from attention deficit disorder, emotional disability, or cognitive disabilities. Students do in fact confront real mental and emotional problems, but we need to consider the way students' racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic characteristics are deployed to make their assignments to these disability categories more likely.

Gloria Ladson Billings



# How Much More Likely Are African American Students to Be in Special Ed.?

## ▶ Relative Risk for Indiana's AA students:

- *Mental Disability* 2.59 x more
- *Emotional Disturbance* 1.60 x more
- *Communication Disorder* 34% less
- *Regular Class Placement* 27% less
- *Separate Class Placement.* 2.48 x more

# Race, Poverty, and Disproportionality

- ▶ **Poverty not a consistent predictor of placement**
  - Overall, MoMD and ED: *Not significant*
  - CD and LD: *More disproportionality as poverty decreased*
  - MiMD: *Positive and significant*
- ▶ **Race is a significant predictor of special education placement regardless of (independent of) poverty level**
  - Poverty *magnifies* the gap created by race

Skiba, R. J., Poloni-Staudinger, L., Simmons, A. B., Feggins, L. R., & Chung, C. G. (2005). Unproven links: Can poverty explain ethnic disproportionality in special education? *Journal of Special Education*, 39, 130-144.

# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Facilitates and supports the achievement of all students through cultural competency at three levels:

- The Institutional

- The Instructional

- The Personal

## Cultural competency component of school improvement plan

(a) In developing a school's strategic and continuous school improvement and achievement plan under IC 20-10.2-3, the school's committee shall consider methods to improve the cultural competency of the school's teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students.

(b) The committee shall:

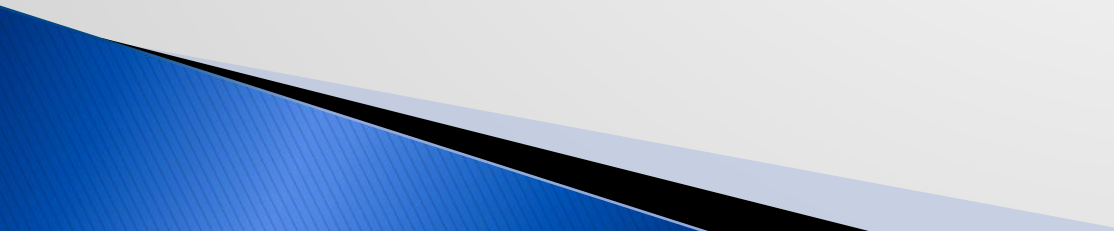
- (1) identify the racial, ethnic, language-minority, cultural, exceptional learning, and socioeconomic groups that are included in the school's student population;

- (2) incorporate culturally appropriate strategies for increasing educational opportunities and educational performance for each group in the school's plan; and

- (3) recommend areas in which additional professional development is necessary to increase cultural competency in the school's educational environment.

In “The Skin That We Speak”, Lisa Delpit says,

“When instruction is stripped of children’s cultural legacies then they are forced to believe that the world and all the good things in it were created by others. This leaves students further alienated from the school and its instructional goals, and more likely to view themselves as inadequate.”



# Instructional

Banks & Banks, Gay, Ladson-Billings, Nieto

- ▶ Acknowledge students' differences as well as their commonalities
- ▶ Validate students' cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials
- ▶ Educate students about the diversity of the world around them
- ▶ Promote equity and mutual respect
- ▶ Assess students' ability and achievement validly
- ▶ Encourage students to think critically
- ▶ Challenge students to strive for excellence as defined by their potential

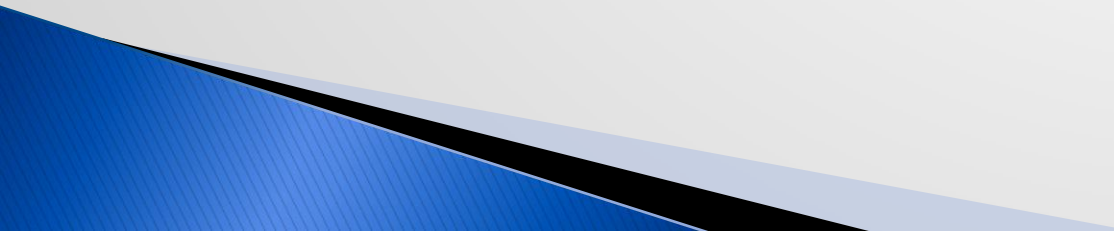
## Approximately 90% of classroom teachers are White

“I thought it was wrong to see color. Like the t-shirts– “Love sees no color”. As I’ve come to understand you’re missing a big part of a person if you refuse to see it” – elementary school teacher

“When a teacher doesn’t see color do they also ignore discriminatory institutional practices such as disproportionality in suspension, graduation, achievement etc.....?”

# Personal

Gay, Villegas & Lucas

- ▶ Engage in reflective practice
  - ▶ Explore personal and family histories
  - ▶ Acknowledge membership in different groups
  - ▶ Learn about the history and experiences of diverse groups
  - ▶ Visit students' families and communities
  - ▶ Visit or read about successful teachers in diverse settings
  - ▶ Participate in reforming the institution
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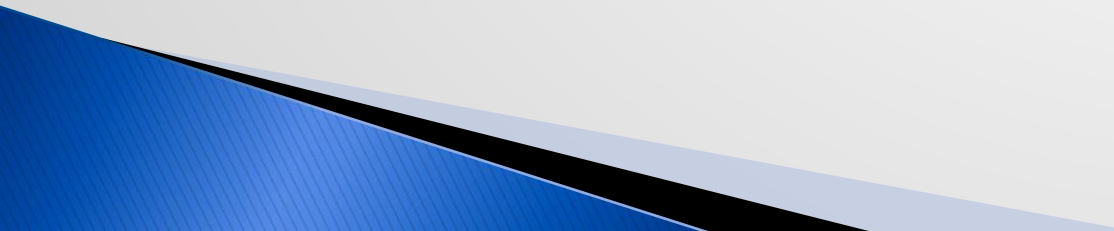


# Profoundly Multicultural Questions

## – Sonia Nieto

“Multicultural education needs to be accompanied by a deep commitment to social justice and equal access to resources..., in short it needs to be about much more than ethnic tidbits and cultural sensitivity.”

“It is easier to adopt a multicultural reader than to assure all children learn to read, to have a concert of ethnic music than to give all children instruments.”



# Profoundly Multicultural Questions

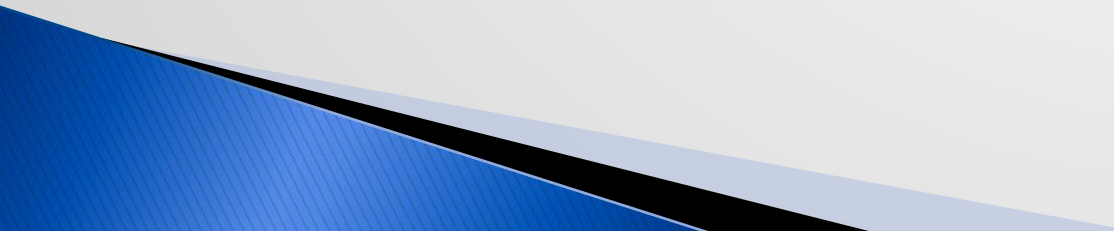
Who's taking calculus?

Which classes meet in the basement?

Who's teaching the children?

How much are children worth?

# Developing Hypotheses

- ▶ Have we considered a range of possible hypotheses?
  - ▶ Have we dug into the data?
  - ▶ Is our process culturally responsive?
  - ▶ Who is not at the table?
- 

# Perspectives on Katrina: Washington Post/ABC News Poll, 9/13/05

**Q:** Overall, do you think problems with the hurricane relief effort are or are not an indication of racial inequality in this country?



No opinion not shown.

# More than talk.....

If our examination and understanding of the root causes of social inequality are too shallow, then our approach to corrective action will necessarily be superficial and ineffective .

– Christine Sleeter

# DATA

Data is an integral part of the process when a school is willing to ask itself about the expectations it holds for children and about culture and power it begins to bring accountability for equity inside.

# DIFFICULT DIALOGUES

Conversing about issues of equity, especially race, is a developmental process; ample time to build trust is necessary.

# OWNERSHIP

Ownership of the process grows through action: ongoing dialogue with colleagues, gaining a deeper understanding of the issues, design, implementation, and assessment.



# Creating a Culture of Inquiry

- ▶ Relevant data
- ▶ Probing questions
- ▶ Examining beliefs about school culture and equity
  - Issues of access
  - Opportunities to learn
  - Expectations of students, staff and community

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# LEADERSHIP

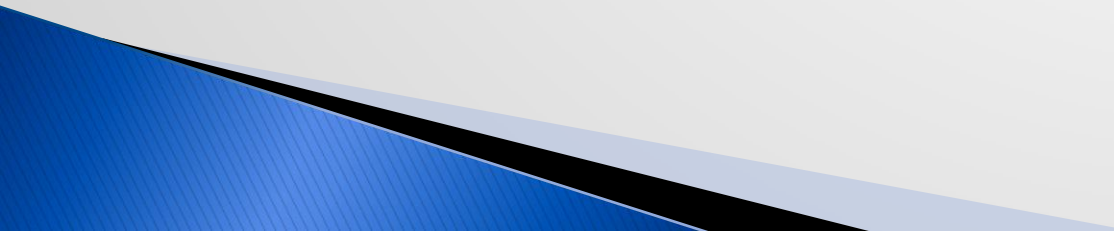
It is by questioning assumptions that a leader is able to influence change. Leadership that is willing to examine their own beliefs, and empower those they work with to do the same, is essential to the process of creating equitable change.

# OWNERSHIP

Ownership of the process grows through action: ongoing dialogue with colleagues, gaining a deeper understanding of the issues, design, implementation, and assessment.

# SUSTAINABILITY

Addressing issues of equity is more likely to be ongoing:

- ▶ When it is viewed as an effort that benefits all children.
  - ▶ When incorporated into the district's overall plans for school improvement and other initiatives.
  - ▶ When the community is involved.
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# Inequities in education must be understood contextually.

The disproportionality of students of color in educational programs cannot be fully comprehended as long as it is considered a singular event, somehow divorced from the broader context of American education and American society.

# Creating change

“The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you can alter, even by a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change the world.”

James Baldwin